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REPORT

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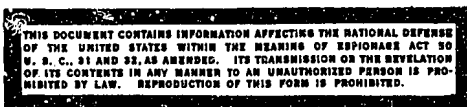
COUNTRY USSR
 SUBJECT Economic - Construction materials industry
 HOW PUBLISHED Daily newspapers
 WHERE PUBLISHED USSR
 DATE PUBLISHED 26 Mar - 23 Apr 1950
 LANGUAGE Russian

DATE OF INFORMATION 1949 - 1950

DATE DIST. 20 Jun 1950

NO. OF PAGES 4

SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO.



THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

SOURCE Newspapers as indicated.

REPORTS SERIOUS SHORTCOMINGS
IN CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS INDUSTRY

SCORES LATVIAN MINISTRY -- Izvestiya, No 73, 26 Mar 50

With the knowledge of the Ministry of Construction Materials Industry Latvian SSR, a number of plants in Latvia have been concealing their reserves in 1949. Production of brick, the most important building material, has made no progress despite the urgent demand for this product. The Ceramics Industry Trust has directed the plants to produce lower grade products.

It was recently discovered that the above ministry had made some fictitious entries. By order of Minister Augshkap, the director of the Riga Slate Plant included unfinished (and semifinished) products in the plan fulfillment and filed a false report. The management and technical engineering staff of the Riga Slate Plant were illegally awarded prizes, supposedly for exceeding the plan. The responsible officials of the ministry have received penalties and the Riga Slate Plant has been requested to return the prize which it was awarded under false pretenses.

KARELO-FINNISH INDUSTRY UNSATISFACTORY -- Leninskoye Znanya, No 74, 12 Apr 50

Enterprises of the Ministry of Construction Materials Industry Karelo-Finnish SSR have received large quantities of equipment and machinery since the war, making it possible to mechanize most of the labor processes. As a result, labor productivity has increased considerably. In 1947, the brick output per worker was 31,000 bricks, whereas in 1949 it increased to 40,300 bricks. Total production of Karelo-Finnish construction materials industry has grown, but the industry is still operating unsatisfactorily and does not meet its plans.

During 1950, the republic is to do extensive construction work and the demand for construction materials has increased tremendously. To satisfy this demand, it is necessary to continue mechanization and to improve the utilization of machinery. However, the Ministry of Construction Materials Industry has neglected this matter. Equipment and machinery are allowed to remain idle for

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long periods as a result of breakdowns and mechanical trouble. Technical rules are violated and repairs are not made in time. For example, in 1949, presses in brick plants were idle for various reasons during 21 percent of the working hours. If this had been avoided, the brick industry could have produced over 5 million additional bricks.

Working conditions in the Letnerechenskiy Brick Plant are especially bad. Machinery in this plant is idle up to 30 percent of the working time. Equipment is used until completely worn out, repairs are made only after breakdowns or forced shutdowns. There are two brick presses at the plant and both of them are frequently out of working order. In May 1949, a new press for tile production was installed at the plant. During the first days of operation, the press was damaged; in addition, a faulty electric motor was installed in it. The plant management has done nothing to improve the situation. Conditions in other enterprises of this ministry are equally bad.

Leninskoye Znamya, No 77, 16 Apr 50

The Ministry of Construction Materials Industry Karelo-Finnish SSR and its enterprises are not meeting production plans. The Letnerechenskiy, Kondopoga, and Sulazh-Gora brick plants have been delivering poor-quality bricks. There have been frequent cases where bricks have crumbled after the first rain.

Few local building materials are being used in the republic, although in Medvezh'yegorsk it would be possible to produce slag blocks and thereby reduce the necessity of bringing in bricks from outside. However, nothing has been done in this matter.

LENINGRAD SHORT OF BRICKS, ROOFING IRON -- Leningradskaya Pravda, No 94, 20 Apr 50

The "Lenpromstroy" Trust in Leningrad has complained of an acute shortage of bricks, which are badly needed for the construction of apartment houses. The supply meets only about 50 percent of the demand, and the available bricks are of poor quality. There is an equal shortage of roofing iron. A number of houses stand unfinished as the builders are unable to obtain the necessary roofing material.

There were many brick plants in Leningrad Oblast before the war. These have not yet been reopened. Reconstruction of "Metallokombinat," the main supplier of roofing iron for Leningrad City, has been greatly delayed.

CHKALOV OBLAST PRODUCTION INADEQUATE -- Pravda, No 92, 2 Apr 50

Industrial, housing, and cultural construction in Chkalov Oblast is progressing on a large scale. The demand for local building materials is growing constantly. Although production of these materials has exceeded the prewar level, it is still far from adequate.

The oblast has all the prerequisites for the production of sufficient quantities of local building materials. Aside from enterprises of the Ministry of Construction Materials Industry, the oblast has a large number of brick, lime, and alabaster plants belonging to the Ministry of Construction of Heavy Industry Enterprises, the Ministry of Transportation, the Ministry of Petroleum Industry, and the Ministry of Heavy Machine Building. They produce 80 percent of all the brick for the oblast, more than 75 percent of all the lime, and more than 50 percent of the alabaster used in the oblast.

Enterprises of the "Orskmetallurgstroy" Trust (chief, Svistunov), Ministry of Construction of Heavy Industry Enterprises USSR, operated especially inefficiently in 1949. The Novo-Troitsk Plant completed only 50 percent of the 1949

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plan for fired brick; the Buzuluk Plant, two thirds of the plan; and the Buguruslan Plant of "Buguruslannefit" Trust, Ministry of Petroleum Industry, only 27.5 percent. Production of lime and alabaster was equally low.

The operating capacities of brick plants under the Ministry of Construction of Heavy Industry Enterprises USSR, the Ministry of Transportation USSR, and the Ministry of Petroleum Industry USSR, are utilized less than 50 percent in Chkalov Oblast. From year to year, the ministries give their brick plants lowered production plans and take no steps to improve the utilization of productive capacities. A number of enterprises have not mechanized their operations. Clay mining and hauling is done by manual labor.

Serious errors have also been made in the planning of production. The "Orskmetallurgstroy" Trust approved the 1949 production plan for the Buzuluk Brick Plant in October 1949, that is, close to the end of the year. The plan contained the following errors: planned production of unfired bricks in April was 900,000 bricks, and in October, a season during which unfired brick is not produced due to climatic conditions, the planned output was one million bricks.

Mistakes are still being made in 1950. The above-mentioned ministries have given some of their plans production plans which are even below the 1949 plans. This is causing a delay in the construction of important projects.

UZBEK INDUSTRY LAGGING -- Pravda Vostoka, No 78, 4 Apr 50

At a republic conference of workers of the construction materials industry, Ibragimov, Minister of Construction Materials Industry Uzbek SSR, reported on the results of 1949. Despite the increased output of bricks, cement, lime, and glass, as well as an improvement in quality and a reduction of costs, the Uzbek construction materials industry is still lagging behind capital construction. In 1949, the republic completed only 87.6 percent of the plan for fired bricks, 30.3 percent of the plan for tiles, 75.7 percent for cement, and 56.3 percent for gypsum. This was caused by many errors made by the ministry and individual enterprises. Many brick plants were badly prepared for the season. The Andizhan and Katta-Kurgan plants were 40 days late in starting brick firing. The enterprises are fairly well equipped with machinery, including excavators, presses, and transport machines, but most of them are not operating or are not being fully utilized. Little has been done to improve the brick quality, and most of the bricks produced are of lower and medium quality.

Production costs are high. Bricks cost 2.4 percent more than provided in the plan, cement 5.4 percent more. This is due mainly to poor utilization of basic equipment and low labor productivity. The output per worker was 92.3 percent of the plan. Twenty-five percent of the workers are not fulfilling their norms.

In the first quarter 1950, conditions improved slightly. The brick season began sooner than in 1949.

Pravda Vostoka, No 79, 5 Apr 50

The Ministry of Construction Materials Industry Uzbek SSR failed to meet the 1949 plan. Mechanization of labor is slow. Considerable funds have been wasted due to increased production costs.

Many production errors which were made in 1949 are being repeated this year. The 4th Tashkent Brick Plant, as well as the Namangan and Kuvasay brick plants, failed to meet the first-quarter production plans. This reflected unfavorably on the fulfillment of the first-quarter plan by the ministry as a whole. The ministry and its departments have little contact with their enterprises, as a result of which supplies are often irregular, and technical supervision and planning are inadequate.

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Production of new construction materials, including ceramic blocks, hollow bricks, and facing tiles, is being introduced very slowly. Production of construction parts has not yet been organized in sufficient quantities.

BELORUSSIAN SSR ABOLISHES TRUSTS -- Izvestiya, No 97, 23 Apr 50

Certain administrative changes were recently made by a number of industrial ministries of the Belorussian SSR for the purpose of streamlining operations and cutting down expenses. The Ministry of Construction Materials Industry has obtained good results by introducing these measures.

Until 1949, there were three trusts within the system of this ministry, uniting the enterprises located in several oblasts. Some of these enterprises were at a considerable distance from the trusts. The plant administrations solved most production problems independently, and in more important cases they applied directly to the ministry. The trusts actually proved to be unnecessary links between the enterprises and the ministry.

Some time ago the ministry decided, by way of experiment, to liquidate one of the trusts -- the Grodno -- by taking over its functions. This proved very successful. Direct administration of the plants by the ministry resulted in improved operations. The ministry has not abolished two other trusts, the Minsk and the Vitebsk, with equally good results. At the same time, the ministry has combined a number of small plants. For example, Brick Plant No 32 and Brick and Tile Plant No 31 in Vitebsk have been merged into one enterprise and have greatly improved their operation, in addition to cutting down administrative expenses.

Instead of the former 40 enterprises of the ministry, there are now 25 plants and combines. The administrative personnel of the ministry has been reduced by 100 persons. The enlarged enterprises are now producing 50 percent more goods than before their reorganization.

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